white outer webs of the greater and median wing-coverts become more conspicuous but this is not a very easy field distinction. Knowledge of the calls will enable an observer to distinguish all species of *Streptopelia* without seeing any of them; and, combined with eye-colour and habitat preferences, no real difficulty in identification should be experienced.

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SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

AN APRIL FALL OF PALAEARCTIC MIGRANTS AT NGULIA

The phenomenal falls of southward-moving Palaearctic night migrants at Ngulia Safari Lodge in Tsavo National Park (West) each November-December are well documented (Pearson & Backhurst 1976b, Backhurst & Pearson 1977). Pearson & Backhurst (1976b) suggested that local topography probably accounts for the virtual absence of grounded migrants on return passage in April, when migrants which have cleared the ridge are presumably too high to be attracted to the game-viewing lights at Ngulia Lodge below. As is the case elsewhere in the Tsavo region, the November-December short rains are typically heavier and more reliable than the long rains of March-May, so that low cloud and prolonged rain at night are uncommon in April. In addition, winds in April are often strong, which tend to disperse any mist which may have formed.

Passerine migration at ground level often bears little relation to the situation overhead. This difference is striking at Ngulia in November-December, but even more so in April, when observations since 1971 have revealed very small numbers of migrants compared with routine April concentrations in central and western Kenya (Pearson & Backhurst 1976a, pers. obs.). Apart from a scattering of Red-backed Shrikes* and a few Lesser Grey Shrikes *Lanius minor*, passerine movement in April is typically evidenced by a few Willow Warblers and Whitethroats, occasional Sprossers and Garden Warblers, a few Sedge Warblers *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* and an occasional Marsh Warbler later in the month. Hitherto, only in 1973, late in April, has an appreciable density of warblers (Whitethroats, Sedge, Willow and Marsh Warblers) been encountered in the Ngulia hills in spring (D.J. Pearson *in litt.*).

A single Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus* was the only Palaearctic migrant seen

*Scientific names of most species are given in Table 1.

on an evening drive from the Lodge on 12 April 1977. After a severe storm that evening, a Button Quail *Turnix sylvatica* came to the Lodge bar at 18.50 hrs, but no Palaearctic migrants were noted until 00.30 hrs on 13 April when two warblers were seen in the Lodge grounds. During a dry but overcast period between 04.00 and 05.30 hrs, migrants were coming to the lights in hundreds, though only a Rufous Bush Chat and a Whitethroat were caught in the building. Heavy rain from 05.20 to 06.15 hrs prevented us from setting mist-nets outside the Lodge, and by the time they were set birds were present in thousands throughout the trapping area, in numbers unsurpassed on any of our November-December visits. We caught 99 birds by 08.30 hrs, and the ringing total of 143 (Table 1) does not fairly relect the size of the fall. Previous April visits had led us to expect few migrants so we were not well prepared, and our efforts were further hampered by heavy rain and very strong winds. The most noteworthy features of this total are the dominance of Whitethroats and the virtual absence of Marsh Warblers (these are the two commonest migrants in November-December).

TABLE 1

Numbers of Palaearctic night migrants ringed at Ngulia on 13 April 1977

Species	Number
Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*	7
Basra Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus griseldis*	1
Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris*	2
Upcher's Warbler *Hippolais languida*	5
Olivaceous Warbler *Hippolais pallida*	2
Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*	9
Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*	3
Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*	91
Barred Warbler *Sylvia nisoria*	1
Rufous Bush Chat *Cercotrichas galactotes*	1
Sprosser *Luscinia luscinia*	19
Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos africana*	1
Rock Thrush *Monticola saxatilis*	1

The majority of birds of all species showed visible fat in the tracheal pit (often fully covered or full). Weights in grams (mean ± standard deviation) of the most numerous species were: Whitethroat, 16.7 ± 2.21, 72 birds; Sprosser, 28.2 ± 2.37, 19 birds. Mean weights are greater than any sample means given by Pearson & Backhurst (1976b) for November-January. Thus birds involved in this exceptional April fall were probably headed for destinations hundreds of kilometres north of Ngulia.

Assisted by D.J. Pearson we were able to work the area more thoroughly on 14 April but caught only two migrants and recaptured none of the birds ringed the previous day. We doubt that much feeding took place in the appalling weather conditions of 13 April, but all or most of these grounded birds evidently resumed their migration, taking advantage of a clear night. Reports from Lodge staff suggest that substantial falls took place in very wet conditions later in April 1977. It seems that falls of migrants occur at Ngulia in April only in appalling weather conditions whereas in November-December falls are commonplace on dark nights with only light rain or low mist.

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NOTICES

THE ANNUAL BIRD REPORT

The first of these reports will cover the period 1 July 1976 to 31 December 1977 (earlier unpublished records of interest will, of course, be accepted). Details of Palaearctic records required were given in *Scopus* 1: 55 and they should be sent to B.S. Meadows, Box 30521, Nairobi as soon as possible please. A number of records have been published in the *EANHS Bulletin* which update the information given by Backhurst, Britton & Mann (1973) in the Society's *Journal* 140: 1-38. These, in conjunction with Backhurst *et al.* (1973) and the two-part compilation of records which has been published in *Scopus* (1: 39-43, 78-81) will cover most of the more unusual Palaearctic birds; the references are given here for convenience. *EANHS Bulletin* 1973: 84, 86, 94-96, 111-114.
1974: 2-4, 17-18, 51, 95, 103-4, 112, 163.
1975: 24-30, 65, 83, 87-88.
1976: 21-22, 52-61.

Regarding Ethiopian (and oceanic) species, we are rather concerned about the small number of records received. We realize, however, that the problem here is primarily the selection of records suitable for the report. The need for dates, numbers and localities for established intra-African migrants like Abdim's Stork *Ciconia abdimi* and White-throated Bee-eater *Merops albicollis* is obvious. There is a still greater need, however, for dated records of species believed to be regular migrants, at least locally (like the Knob-billed Goose *Sarkidiornis melanota* and Grey-headed Kingfisher *Halcyon leucocephala*), especially from resident observers making regular observations in one site who are able to comment on the presence or absence of such birds over a particular period. Locality records which are believed to represent an extension of known range should also be submitted. These need not be of rare or localized species; for example, in coastal Kenya a Red-chested Cuckoo *Cuculus solitarius* is a more interesting and valuable record than a Thick-billed Cuckoo *Pachycoccyx audeberti*. Records at exceptionally